

Help us to win the vote

"Since the object of taking a vote is to get at the wish of the majority, it is clear that the only fair and accurate way is for each grown person to have one vote, and cast it to represent himself or herself." —from The Blue Book, by Alice Stone Blackwell

ˈsəf-rij: the right of voting, and the exercise of that right.

Suffrage VOTES FOR WOMEN

History of the 19th Amendment

Women had very few rights in the early 1800s:

- Women could not vote or hold any public office;
- Women had no access to higher education;
- Women were excluded from most professional occupations;
- Women could not make a legal contract or sue;
- Women could not own property;
- Women could not gain custody of their children in the case of divorce; and
- Women had no legal control over their own earned wages.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton

These cultural ties were a form of subtle bondage, which led many women to sympathize with the abolishment of slavery. When they were snubbed at an antislavery convention in London because they were women, Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton decided to hold their own women's rights convention in America. The first convention was held in Seneca Falls, New York in 1848, where participants

Lucretia Mott

signed a "Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions" which is patterned after the Declaration of Independence and decided the main issues and goals for the new women's movement. In the 1860s, the Civil War intervened, and because many women assisted in the war effort, the effort slowed down. But in 1868, after emancipation, all male voters, including newly freed black men, were officially granted the right to vote. This caused many black women to join suffrage organizations. It was a difficult period for suffragists that eventually caused a split in the organization.

Excerpt from the "Declaration of the Sentiments and Resolutions"

"We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. ...Now, in view of this entire disfranchisement of one-half the people of this country, their social and religious degradation—in view of the unjust laws above mentioned, and because women do feel themselves aggrieved, oppressed, and fraudulently deprived of their most sacred rights, we insist that they have immediate admission to all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of the United States. ..."

Left: Mrs. Harriot Stanton Black (daughter of Elizabeth Cady Stanton), spoke to a crowd of men on Wall Street, New York City, sometime between 1915-1920.



National Timeline

- 1790 New Jersey grants the vote to "all free inhabitants."
- 1807 The right to vote is taken from New Jersey women by a politician who had nearly been defeated by female voters.
- 1850 Amelia Jenks Bloomer promotes "bloomers," the first attempt at liberating women from the confines of the long dress. Later, many suffragists return to wearing long gowns, worried the controversy around bloomers detracts attention from their cause.
- 1866 Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony form the American Equal Rights Association. It merges the suffragists with the American Anti-Slavery Association, which enabled white women, black women, and black men to work together for suffrage.
- 1868 The 14th Amendment to the Constitution is ratified, and defines both citizens and voters as "male." This caused a split in the organization, with Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony forming the more radical National Woman Suffrage Association that only wants to fight for women's suffrage, and to exclude men.
- 1869 Lucy Stone and Julie Ward Howe form the American Woman Suffrage Association, a relatively conservative group which included men.
- 1871 Esther Morris becomes the nation's first female government official upon her appointment as justice of the peace of South Pass City, Wyoming.
- 1872 Susan B. Anthony is arrested for attempting to vote in the Presidential Election. Sojourner Truth is turned away at the polls.
- 1874 The National Woman's Christian Temperance Union is founded by Annie Wittenmeyer and begins to ally itself with the suffrage cause. This alarms the liquor lobby, which fears a move to prohibit the sale of liquor.
- 1878 The Woman's Suffrage Amendment, to grant women the right to vote, is introduced in the U.S. Congress.
- 1883 Electoral battles in Nebraska and Indiana are lost because of the swaying of politicians by the liquor lobby. Congress denies women in Utah the right to vote. Kansas women win the right to vote in municipal elections. Rhode Island becomes the first eastern state to vote on a women's suffrage referendum, but it does not pass.
- 1893 The two suffrage organizations merge to form the National American Woman Suffrage Association. Elizabeth Cady Stanton becomes the new organization's first president. The male voters of Colorado make their state the second in which women have full voting rights.
- 1910 The first large-scale suffrage parade is held, in New York City.
- 1911 California grants full voting rights to women.
- 1912 Women in Alaska, Oregon, Arizona and Kansas win full voting rights. For the first time, presidential candidates try to appeal to women voters.
- 1913 Alice Paul organizes a large suffrage parade in Washington, D.C.
- 1914 The U.S. Senate votes on the "Susan B. Anthony Amendment," but it does not pass. Nevada and Montana women win full voting rights.
- 1916 Jeanette Rankin, a Montana suffragist, becomes the first woman elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. World War I slows the suffrage effort, because many women stop to help with the war.
- 1919 June 4, the 19th Amendment is proposed by resolution of the U.S. Congress.
- 1920 August 26, the 19th Amendment is ratified!

Washington State Timeline

- 1854 Washington Territory nearly becomes first in the nation to legalize voting for women, but the women's suffrage bill fails by one vote.
- 1883 Full women's suffrage is approved in Washington Territory.
- 1887 Women's suffrage is overturned.
- 1889 Washington becomes a state, and again suffrage is voted on by male Washingtonians, and defeated.
- 1910 Washington's male voters approve suffrage rights for good this time, breaking a 14-year stagnation of victory for the national crusade. Washington's enactment opened the doors for many other Western states that soon followed.
- 1911 Carrie Shumway (Kirkland City Council) becomes the first woman on record to be elected to office in Washington. Several follow, including Nina Jolidon Croake (King County) and Frances Axtell (Whatcom County), elected to the State House of Representatives, and Josephine Corliss Preston, elected as State Superintendent of Schools.
- 1990 Washington State has more women elected to its state legislature than any state in the country.

Sojourner Truth

In 1851, at an Akron, Ohio Women's Convention, a former slave named Sojourner Truth gave her anthem speech "Ain't I a Woman," part of which reads: "...That man over there say that women needs to be helped into carriages, lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed, and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman?"

Below: Breaking bottles to publicize the prohibition of alcohol. Permission by MSCUA, University of Washington Libraries.



Susan B. Anthony

Susan B. Anthony embraced many social causes for women, including the abolition of slavery, education, legal rights, temperance, labor and suffrage. Her efforts were often met with hostility, including frequent mobs of angry people. Many times her image was hung in effigy. Despite this, Anthony, in 1866, helped found the American Equal Rights Association with Elizabeth Cady Stanton. She subsequently traveled the country, giving speeches, protesting, hanging posters, distributing leaflets and promoting petitions. In protest, she cut her hair and wore "bloomers" for a short while. Anthony passed away in 1906 and never experienced women's suffrage. In 1979, Susan B. Anthony was honored by having her image applied to a limited supply of American silver dollars.

temperance

In the late 1800s, suffragettes began to ally themselves with the cause of "temperance" (the prohibition of all liquor sales in the United States). This alarmed the liquor lobby, which feared women voters might lead to the prohibition of alcohol. Brewers, distillers and wealthy businessmen fought back hard, and managed to suppress the cause of suffrage.

The split organizations reorganized themselves into a single organization, the National American Woman Suffrage Association.

The burning embers of the cause began to catch fire, and by 1912, Theodore Roosevelt's Progressive Party became the first national political party to

embrace the cause of women's suffrage. Some suffrage leaders formed a group called the Congressional Union, began using more militant tactics for their cause, and became the very first to picket the White House. It became a badge of honor to be arrested for civil disobedience. Hunger strikes also gained favor. Huge parades were organized, with women riding gallant white horses to dramatically publicize the cause. The "Progressive Era" had dawned, and as an expression of social freedom and cultural change, women began to shorten their hair as well as their skirts.



Above: Men looking in the window of the National Anti-Suffrage Association around 1911.

labor

Because the cause of temperance only set them back, the suffragists chose to ally themselves with the rising worker's union, and assisted them by marching in support for worker's rights. By their willing assistance with strikes, the suffrage cause drew many working-class women. To improve their campaign the suffragists adopted a color scheme, borrowed from England. The colors of England were green (hope), purple (dignity) and white (purity).

In America, the green was replaced by gold. They used these colors everywhere, on pamphlets, posters, banners, scarves, ribbons, pins and jewelry.

Carrie Chapman Catt

In 1916, National American Woman Suffrage Association president Carrie Chapman Catt announced a bold new plan to gain national suffrage, a plan that effectively organized the separate suffrage groups into one body working toward a single goal. They also aligned themselves with the war effort, which drew many people to their cause. That same year, Jeannette Rankin of Montana became the first American woman elected to represent her state in the U.S. House of Representatives. Later, in 1918, she opened the debate in the House for a new suffrage amendment, which passed.

Above: Suffrage parade, New York City, May 6, 1912.

Right: First ever picketers at the White House, 1912.

The first states to grant suffrage were in the West because western pioneers were generally more independent than Easterners, and because the population was smaller, women were often called upon to do men's jobs.

The first states to grant women suffrage were Wyoming (1890), Colorado (1893), Utah and Idaho (1896), Washington (1910), California (1912) and Oregon, Kansas and Arizona (1912).

Right: A 1913 pamphlet for the Washington D.C. Suffrage parade, full of romanticized imagery of "women knights" fighting the battle for suffrage.

Two Washington women locally waged the war for suffrage with very different styles—Emma Smith DeVoe in western Washington with a refined, patriotic style and May Arkwright Hutton in eastern Washington with a confrontational, feisty approach. DeVoe used various tactics, such as postcards, posters and cookbooks to spread the word. Her avoidance of confrontation kept her from alienating brewers and big business, which helped Washington to become one of the first states to grant women the vote. Hutton was more focused on labor rights and did not hesitate to push her agenda.

Washington Secretary of State SAM REED

suffrage!



On June 4, 1919, the 19th Amendment was proposed by resolution of the U.S. Congress. This time, the anti-suffrage movement was not strong enough to derail the Amendment, and three-fourths of the states in America voted to grant women's suffrage.

On August 26, 1920, the 19th Amendment was ratified, finally granting American women suffrage. The 19th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America reads: "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the States or by any State on account of sex. Congress shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation."

For more information on Voting and Elections in Washington please visit, www.secstate.wa.gov. Poster published by the Office of the Secretary of State, Elections Division. All pictures obtained from Library of Congress website, "American Memory," unless otherwise noted.